

GAC Update (Feb. 16)

From: "Beaulieu, Sebastien -NGA" <"o=dfait-maeci/ou=exchange administrative group (fydibohf23spdlt)/cn=recipients/cn=8a3a5272e45440ffa3bcfddde1740d43-beaulis">
To: "Sully, Jennifer" <jennifer.sully@tc.gc.ca>, nancy.faraday-smith@ps-sp.gc.ca, michael.holmes@ps-sp.gc.ca, david.thelen@ps-sp.gc.ca, "Pharand, Marc-Andre -NGA" <marc-andre.pharand@international.gc.ca>, "Denter, Christian -NGB" <christian.denter@international.gc.ca>, timothy.mackey@pco-bcp.gc.ca, "McQuarrie, Chris" <chris.mcquarrie@tc.gc.ca>, "Stendardo, Frank -WSHDC -TD" <frank.stendardo@international.gc.ca>, "Joly, Brigitte" <brigitte.joly@tc.gc.ca>, "McGregor, Daniel" <daniel.mcgregor@tc.gc.ca>
Cc: "Ramcharan, Lisette -NGQ" <lisette.ramcharan@international.gc.ca>, "Raiche, Vincent -NGQ" <vincent.raiche@international.gc.ca>, "Dixon, Lucas -NGQ" <lucas.dixon@international.gc.ca>, "Coulombe, Evelyne -NGB" <evelyne.coulombe@international.gc.ca>, "Parsons, Alanna -NGB" <alanna.parsons@international.gc.ca>, "Denter, Christian -NGB" <christian.denter@international.gc.ca>, "Vézina, Catherine -NGA" <catherine.vezina@international.gc.ca>, "Pharand, Marc-Andre -NGA" <marc-andre.pharand@international.gc.ca>
Date: Wed, 16 Feb 2022 21:05:20 +0000
Attachments: Trucker Protest Rollup 1 (Feb 16).docx (37.42 kB); Florida Proclamation.docx (177.8 kB)

Daily check-in from GAC.
 S.

From: Beaulieu, Sebastien -NGA
Sent: February 16, 2022 3:56 PM
To: [...]
Subject: s.38 GAC Update (Feb. 16)

Here's an update on the Canadian s.38 from a US (and global) perspective, prepared for the deputies.
 Please share with MINOs.
 S.
 Approved: NGM/M.Grant.

1. Canada-US Engagement:

- TC Minister Alghabra had a call with U.S. Amb. Cohen (Feb.15). The Ambassador thanked the Minister and the Canadian government for their efforts in addressing the blockades and to get the major crossings open, including the Ambassador bridge.
- 2. **US Political Reactions to Canadian Measures:** U.S. reactions across the political spectrum point to Canada being pulled in to the deep U.S. polarization. Some protests took place on Tuesday in front of the Canadian Consulate General in NY (see below). Our US network is receiving calls and letters. Some U.S. elected officials are very critical on social media:
 - "When Canada became Egypt" -- Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY)
 - "Canadian truckers being fired and now targeted as "terrorists" by your woke government" -- Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-TX-2)

- “The truckers leading the Freedom Convoy deserve our gratitude & support.” -- Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-NY-1)
- “Today’s [@clayandbuck](#) talks Canada’s new dictator” -- Rep. Jim Jordan
- Retweet: “Tucker Carlson (@TuckerCarlson): Trudeau brings martial law to Canada.” -- Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC)
- “In Canada, servicemembers are being persecuted for supporting a peaceful protest. The US must defend democracy in North America.” Rep. Jim Banks (R-IN-3)

International copycat actions and reactions

- **Florida (Feb. 15):** Florida’s Chief Financial Officer, Jimmy Patronis, issued a state proclamation commending and supporting the Canadian Trucker “Freedom Convoy”, noting that he “stands by their right to demand personal freedom and opposition to repression by the Trudeau government.” The Proclamation also includes a series of statements, some of which refers to “an oppressive measure” imposed by PM Trudeau on unvaccinated Canadian truckers, and qualifies the protestors as “hard-working freedom loving Canadian truckers” (text attached).



3. **Seattle (Feb. 15):** The Pacific Highway border crossing has just reopened, following days of intense protests against Covid-19 vaccine mandates. RCMP officers in Surrey BC said that 16 arrests have been made since Saturday. During that period, traffic was redirected to neighbouring border crossings (such as at the Abbotsford/Sumas crossing), causing major traffic disruptions and long delays. On Feb 14, SEATL FPDS spoke with Nicole Longpre, BC govt Intergovernmental Affairs, who mentioned they were in touch with the WA state governor’s office to exchange information about the protests.

4. **Alaska:** On Feb. 6, a convoy of Alaskan truckers rallied in support of vaccine mandates protests taking place in Canada. Over 100 trucks and many other support vehicles drove 10 miles between Anchorage and the community of Eagle River. Senator Dan Sullivan, Anchorage Mayor Dave Bronson, Senate candidate Kelly Tshibaka and Anchorage Assemblywoman Jamie Allard also attended the rally in support, though Senator Sullivan stated that he himself is vaccinated and he encouraged others to do so. There was a similar event held in Fairbanks, AK that same day. On Feb. 9, AK Senator Sullivan also participated in a local, far-right radio program and spoke in support of the Canadian trucker protests.
5. **New York (Feb. 15):** For the second week in a row, a group called Freedom Convoy of New York has staged a protest in front of the Consulate General in midtown Manhattan, in solidarity with the protesters in Ottawa. Yesterday's protest included approximately 50 people and while they have been quite loud, they have been peaceful. Both Canadian and US flags were visible, as were anti-mandate and anti-government signage. Social media reports indicate anti-mandate protests may continue weekly in New York until July 4th, but it is unclear if Canada will be a target on an ongoing basis. In both cases, CNGNY was aware in advance of the planned protest, and was in communication with NYPD and Department of State Diplomatic Security Services (DSS) who were on hand to monitor and respond if required. Comments so far on the events in Canada – and the measures announced Monday – are quite supportive.



6. **Mexico (Feb. 15):** PM Trudeau announcement re. the *Emergencies Act* has received ample media attention in Mexico, but reporting has been largely fact-based. Mexican politicians and officials have been effectively silent on the issue, with the exception of one right-wing ex-member of Congress from Nuevo León, Carlos Leal, who tweeted that this is an “example of the authoritarianism of the progressive left.” Leal was expelled from AMLO’s Morena party and has hopes of creating his own party.



s.38

8. **Oslo (Feb. 15):** A *Freedom Convoy Norway 2022* is in fact in the works for Saturday, February 19 with aim to bring a convey of vehicles and protesters to Norway's Parliament during the day, onward visits to major media outlets and then a celebration at Parliament in the evening, along with music, noise and a torch-light procession. The organizers invite participants to bring their toothbrushes sharing their intent to remain in Oslo. The group has taken its inspiration from the convoy in Canada, which is clearly identified on its public Facebook page (with some 25K members). Their demands are for a permanent end to COVID-19 related measures (that vaccines must remain voluntary; that there is no masking, testing, quarantine or social distancing requirements). Recently, Norway followed quickly

behind Denmark and Sweden in lifting measures – a first announcement a couple of weeks ago that eliminated most measures and a further update this past Saturday that also eliminated masking and social distancing (essentially ending all COVID measures and restrictions).

9. **Stockholm (Feb. 16):** STKHM learned this morning, via Twitter, of a “Freedom Convoy Sweden” protest planned for this coming weekend. On Saturday there will be demonstrations at Mynttorget in the old town. This is the main event which is organised by the “freedom convoy/frihetsrörelsen”, who are protesting against the government in general. However, the person organising the event is, according to the police, not very experienced in organizing these types of events, and it seems to be many different groups coming and demonstrating against different things, including high diesel/fuel costs, vaccines and COVID restrictions (which have now virtually all been lifted in Sweden as of 9 February). On Sunday, it will be a demonstration in support of the demonstrations in Canada. First they will be at Swedish Television (near the American Embassy) and then in the square next to STKHM. Apparently the organiser had asked to be closer to the embassy, but this was denied. Permission has yet to be granted for these demonstrations, but it is expected shortly. At the moment, the police aren’t sure how many people might protest on Sunday, but they are expecting it to be smaller than Saturday. They noted that the organizer on Sunday is a bit unpredictable, but he has apparently not been violent in the past. STKHM has found a private Facebook group, “Convoy 2022 Sweden/Sverige,” which was created on January 27 with close to 30,500 members and almost 2,800 posts to date.
10. **Rome (Feb. 15):** A major protest planned in Rome in solidarity with the Freedom convoys that have popped up in a number of European cities did not gather the huge crowds promised by its promoters on social media. To their surprise and disappointment, turnout was very low. The hundred or so demonstrators on site, kept on the sidewalks by security forces, called on police officers to join them, hoping to gain their sympathy and increase their numbers. Italian authorities took decisive measures to prevent unwelcome disturbances to the city, including closing a number of areas in the centre of Rome and monitoring points of entry into the centre of the city. However, as energy prices and inflation continue to affect consumers, adding to pandemic fatigue, more protesters could join future demonstrations being planned. There is now talk of another set of protests being organized for February 22, 2022, in several Italian cities. Convoys and blockades in Canada have been covered by Italian media, particularly after the state of emergency was declared in Ottawa. Topics covered have included PM Trudeau’s statements, as well as his move to a safe location; issues around fundraising via GoFundMe; economic repercussions of the border blockades; decision by some provinces to ease restrictions; and police actions to remove blockades. ROME has counted over 100 articles.
11. **Wellington (Feb. 16):** Protesters remain on Parliament grounds for a ninth day, with no signs they will be leaving soon, and it appears that the National Police are now taking over from the Wellington Police. National Police Commissioner Andrew Coster expects the towing of illegally parked vehicles to start “in the next day or so”. Police are working with a small number of towing firms and have appealed for more to be involved. That said, plans to tow vehicles may not go smoothly, as regional towing operators refuse to participate to protect the safety of their staff. Towing operators spoken to by online news publication The Spinoff report a constant barrage of abuse and death threats that began as the protest

convoy arrived in Wellington last week. The Spinoff reports that one operator received a call from a participant in the Canadian convoy in support of their NZ compatriots. Discussions are also ongoing with the NZ Defence Force, to determine what assistance its personnel can provide. On Tuesday, February 15, the Wellington City Council issued 335 parking tickets around the Parliament precinct, bringing the total to more than 500 fines. In his round of morning interviews, Police Commissioner Andrew Coster was asked whether NZ should replicate Canada's use of executive power to compel towing companies to help clear protests. Coster demurred, noting that the situation in Wellington has not reached a "state of emergency". He further noted that escalation seen overseas adds "anger and resentment" but does not necessarily "close out the underlying problems". PM Ardern told the NZ Herald she received "regular updates" from police on the protest. When asked how long she would tolerate the protest lasting, Ardern noted that was an operational matter for Police.

Drafted: NGA/M.-A. Pharand & S.Beaulieu

With input from: WSHDC/PA/P.Lambo and reports from missions.

Approved: NGM/M.Grant

Sébastien BEAULIEU
Executive Director / Directeur Exécutif
Relations US Relations (NGA)
Mobile: s.38



Some Congressional Reactions to *Emergencies Act* on social media

Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) | US Senate Tweet - February 16, 2022

- When Canada became Egypt . . . ruled by emergency edict that allows prohibition of public assembly, travel, and the commandeering of private companies without your day in court. [Trudeau's power grab is unconstitutional | Opinion](#)

Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) | US Senate Tweet - February 16, 2022

- Maybe the ACLU should travel to Canada to get a first hand look at what non-partisan, spirited defense of civil liberties looks like. Not one peep from ACLU on Biden's emergency act abuse with vaccine mandates. [Canadian Civil Liberties Association: Trudeau's Emergencies Act Invocation Is Not Legitimate](#)

Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY-21) | US House Facebook Post - February 15, 2022

- I'm calling on both Canada and the United States to release a plan to drop all COVID-19 requirements, so our cross-border travel can resume and our North Country communities can be restored.
- While Canada is easing some testing requirements, our North Country communities have suffered from Northern Border travel restrictions for too long.
- It's time to resume pre-pandemic life, and Northern Border travel is crucial for North Country families, small businesses, and tourism.

Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-NY-1) | US House Tweet - February 15, 2022

- The truckers leading the Freedom Convoy deserve our gratitude & support. They are also standing up for the 2-year-old still masked up, the hero fired for not being "vaxxed", & the 6-year-old who needs to show their papers to eat at a restaurant. End ALL COVID mandates TODAY!

Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-8) | US House Tweet - February 15, 2022

- I am relieved that the disruption to vital US-Canada trade has been cleared. [Bridge linking U.S. and Canada reopens after police remove last protesters](#)

Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH-4) | US House Tweet - February 15, 2022

- RT @ClayTravis: Today's @clayandbuck talks Canada's new dictator, Durham probe being ignored by media & more with @Jim_Jordan@jordanbpeter@BillHagertyTN & Michelle Tafoya on Super Bowl & leaving sports. It's great. Go listen & subscribe: [The Clay Travis and Buck Sexton Show: Clay Travis and Buck Sexton Show H1 – Feb 15 2022 on Apple Podcasts](#)
- Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC)** Tweet - February 15, 2022
- This.  Tucker Carlson (@TuckerCarlson): Trudeau brings martial law to Canada. <https://t.co/RsiTrChlMe>
- Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-TX-2) | US House** Tweet - February 15, 2022
- Quick note to Canadian truckers being fired and now targeted as “terrorists” by your woke government: The USA has a trucker shortage AND a work visa program. Here's the link: H-2B Temporary Non-Agricultural Workers
- Rep. Jim Banks (R-IN-3) | US House** Tweet - February 15, 2022
- In Canada, servicemembers are being persecuted for supporting a peaceful protest. The US must defend democracy in North America. Trucker convoy: 2 members of counter-terrorism unit under probe for alleged involvement - National | Globalnews.ca
- Rep. Matt Rosendale (R-MT-1) | US House** Tweet - February 15, 2022
- Happy to see Montanans at the Port of Roosville show their support to end the COVID-19 vaccine mandates for essential travel into Canada. The truck convoy extended approximately 7 miles to Eureka. <https://t.co/joGDZmyuKr>

US Abbreviated Articles (full text attached)

Which U.S. communities sent money to support the Canadian trucker protests?

Washington Post, Aaron C. Davis, Andrew Ba Tran, and Dalton Bennett, 15 February 2022
Residents in wealthy enclaves across the United States — from Beverly Hills, Calif., to suburbs of Austin, to Florida beach communities — sent millions of dollars to support trucker convoys that occupied the Canadian capital and shut down commerce at key border crossings between the two nations, according to a Washington Post analysis of leaked fundraising data posted online over the past 48 hours.

Canadian truck drivers distance themselves from ‘Freedom Convoy’ protests

Washington Post, Claire Parker, 16 February 2022
In just a matter of weeks, Canadian truck drivers protesting coronavirus vaccine mandates became the unexpected darlings of the global right wing.

Canada eyeing ‘no-go’ zones in Ottawa to quell ‘Freedom Convoy’ protests, official says

Washington Post, Ellen Francis and Andrew Jeong, 16 February 2022
Canadian authorities say never-before-used emergency powers will now allow them to establish “no-go” zones in the capital, Ottawa, where protesters against pandemic restrictions from the self-styled “Freedom Convoy” remained defiant in the face of a tightening crackdown.

Opinion: Justin Trudeau’s move to end the trucker protest was risky but correct

Washington Post, Editorial Board, 15 February 2022
Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is justified in invoking an emergency law enabling enhanced government powers to end the protest that has paralyzed the capital city of Ottawa, savaged public order and inflicted significant damage on the world’s 10th-largest economy.

Behind the Fractious Collaboration Steering the Canada Protests

New York Times, Sarah Maslin Nir and Natalie Kitroeff, 15 February 2022
Since the big rigs entrenched in the core of Canada’s capital first pulled in nearly three weeks ago, they have arranged themselves in a semblance of order, parking in evenly spaced rows. Their drivers have stayed warm and are fed by a corps of marshaled volunteers, and though they have varying

personal beliefs, they appear carefully on-message: “Freedom!” has been the repeated refrain for the past 19 days.

‘Freedom Convoy’ Protesters in Canada’s Capital City Dig In After Tougher Measures

Wall Street Journal, Paul Vieira and Kim Mackrael, 15 February 2022

The Canadian government on Tuesday defended its decision to invoke unusual emergency powers to quell protests that have paralyzed the capital for 19 days, with the country’s top security official calling a small group behind the current demonstrations a serious threat.

Washington Post - Opinion Piece:

Unregulated crowdfunding sites can fuel international crises

The Ottawa protests and border shutdowns were funded in part by anonymous donations from the U.S. Should sites that enable such payments be held accountable?

By Jeremy Snyder

Jeremy Snyder is a professor in the health-sciences department of Simon Fraser University and author of “Exploiting Hope: How the Promise of New Medical Interventions Sustains Us — and Makes Us Vulnerable.”

The truckers who paralyzed Ottawa and blocked U.S.-Canada border crossings while protesting coronavirus-related restrictions have been supported through crowdfunding platforms, a situation that is producing its own series of controversies.

On Feb. 4, GoFundMe [announced](#) it was closing a campaign backing the “Freedom Convoy,” which had raised more than \$7.5 million on the site. GoFundMe said that what was billed as a peaceful protest had become an “occupation, with police reports of violence and other unlawful activity,” violating the company’s terms of service. GoFundMe first said it would refund donations to anyone requesting them, distributing leftover money to charities chosen by the Freedom Convoy organizers, but after that plan came under fire, it made the refunds automatic.

Soon after GoFundMe’s announcement, figures including Florida governor [Ron DeSantis](#) (R) and Texas Attorney General [Ken Paxton](#) (R) pledged to investigate the platform for not distributing the money as promised. Organizers promptly switched to GiveSendGo — a site that brands itself as “the leader in Christian fundraising” — where they’ve raised over \$9 million and counting. GiveSendGo has made a niche for itself as a host for causes that [GoFundMe won’t touch](#) or has shut down. People arrested in the [Jan. 6](#) attack on the U.S. Capitol, police officers accused of [misconduct](#) and homicide, [QAnon conspiracists](#) and proponents of [vaccine misinformation](#) all eagerly appeal for money on the site. The episode, in short, seemed to be mirroring controversies in which right-wing voices say they have been “censored” by social media companies such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook — inspiring conservatives to criticize these platforms. (On Monday, hackers [disabled](#) the GiveSendGo website and publicized what appeared to be the names and addresses of some of the donors.)

Crowdfunding sites are different in important ways from other social media sites, as the truckers’ successful fundraising on GiveSendGo demonstrates. When extremist voices are kicked off mainstream social media platforms because they are spreading medical misinformation, using discriminatory and abusive language or making threats, they often find homes on alternative platforms such as Gab and Gettr (Twitter substitutes) and Rumble (YouTube). Those platforms often become unsatisfying echo chambers, however, because scale is key to a successful social media site. But with crowdfunding sites — where people only have to visit once to funnel money to the cause of their choice — any site willing to fund unsavory or unlawful activities can do so effectively.

The episode raises the question of whether GiveSendGo, GoFundMe and similar sites should be regulated more heavily than they now are (and more heavily than other tech platforms), given that they can be used to raise and send money anonymously across an international border to fuel protests tinged with violence. (Even before the hack, comments on the donation pages showed that a substantial number of contributors were Americans.) Such regulations might include requiring disclosure of donations to financial regulators in some cases, particularly for large international donations. Crowdfunding platforms might also be held criminally liable when they materially facilitate criminal activities.

Of course, it's not always clear which protests will turn violent or include illegal acts. But in the case of the protests in Canada, local officials had [clearly communicated](#) that the bridge and street blockades contravened local laws — yet the money continued to flow. On Thursday, an Ottawa court blocked GiveSendGo from distributing donations, agreeing with city officials that the money was underwriting violence and harassment. Even so, at least until it was hacked, GiveSendGo continued to collect donations and [to claim](#) it would send them abroad to aid the protesters. If the truckers who ignored court orders to disperse can be arrested, surely it also makes sense to hold accountable the companies facilitating their actions.

It's important to draw a line between unpopular or controversial causes — such as the legal defense of police officers accused of violence — and illegal ones. But as the House Select Committee investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection continues its work, those concerned about avoiding a repeat performance in Washington should pay careful attention to what's going on in Canada and how it's being supported. So should law enforcement officials preparing to deal with a potential American [version](#) of the trucker demonstration.

Crowdsourced fundraising for political protest can be problematic even when illegal actions are not an issue. As the trucker protest began, for instance, the massive success of the GoFundMe fundraiser was held up as evidence that the truckers had significant grass-roots support in Canada. But the discovery that many significant donations came from [anonymous](#) U.S. donors (urged on by right-wing figures like Fox News host [Tucker Carlson](#)) threw the breadth and depth of support into question.

We've already seen — notably in the 2016 presidential election — how domestic populist and far-right groups and foreign actors can [use social media platforms](#) to further their agendas and disrupt domestic politics. Crowdfunding sites provide additional cause for concern. The success of the protests in Canada shows how crowdfunding campaigns can help to capture the attention of the media in the lead-up to an event, increase the apparent clout of fringe groups, and even put pressure on political leaders to respond to and compromise with these protesters. Contrary to the impression created by the fundraising and the protests, [polls](#) and health data in Canada show overwhelming [support](#) for vaccination, and strong [support](#) for government-led efforts to fight the pandemic.

In response to this crowdfunded protest, Canada's House of Commons is now [exploring](#) tracking how crowdfunding campaigns channel foreign funding into domestic extremist groups, a move that U.S. lawmakers might want to emulate.

Governments, of course, should always be hesitant to restrict free speech — in the tech sector and elsewhere — and the proper regulation of crowdfunding sites demands careful study. It is certainly possible that requiring donations in some cases to be disclosed would be a better course than more-aggressive bans on supporting certain protests. But restricting the funding of illegal acts, it should be clear, is not the same thing as restricting speech.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/02/14/gofundme-crowdfunding-ottawa-protests/>

Politico Pro

Canada defends emergency action as way to stop ‘overthrow’

BY ANDY BLATCHFORD | 02/15/2022 06:23 PM EST

OTTAWA, Ont. — Forced to defend its decision to employ [last-resort measures](#) against trucker protests, the Canadian government revealed Tuesday who it thinks it’s up against.

“There have been those who have tried to characterize these illegal blockades about vaccines and mandates and fatigue with the pandemic,” Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino told a press conference Tuesday. “That is not what is driving this movement right now. What is driving this movement is a very small, organized group that is driven by an ideology to overthrow the government.”

A convoy roared into Ottawa nearly three weeks ago. Hundreds of trucks and protesters, at times numbering in the thousands, have overrun the heart of the capital city.

Other convoys have barricaded ports of entry across Canada.

Mendicino argued that arrests Monday at a border crossing in Coutts in Alberta offer a “cautionary tale” about precisely what authorities are dealing with.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police discovered a group who had been blockading the crossing had a [“cache of firearms,” body armor, high capacity magazines and a large quantity of ammunition](#). The RCMP says it arrested 11 people who it believed were prepared to use force if officers tried to take down the blockade.

“The seizure of a significant number of illegal firearms by a group that is very committed to the cause is something that we need to be very sober about,” said Mendicino, a former federal prosecutor.

Some protest organizers, who have called for Trudeau’s resignation, [have been linked to far-right extremism](#).

Until Tuesday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Cabinet ministers had stuck with the word “illegal” to describe trucker protests that have overtaken downtown Ottawa and blocked economically vital border crossings. The Ambassador Bridge between Detroit, Mich., and Windsor, Ont., was shut down for nearly a week.

The Trudeau government [took the unprecedented step late Monday of invoking the Emergencies Act](#), a powerful legislative instrument created for national crises.

Authorities at all levels have taken heavy criticism for failing to end — and in many cases to even intervene in — the trucker demonstrations. Earlier Tuesday, [Ottawa police chief Peter Sloly resigned with the city still in the grip of the crisis](#).

The Emergencies Act equips authorities with temporary powers such as compelling tow truck operators to remove semi-trailers dug in just steps from Parliament Hill.

The measures are also designed to crush organizers' funding sources and impose tougher consequences for public assembly that breach the peace, with penalties of up to C\$5,000 or a maximum of five years in prison, or both.

Mendicino's description of "Freedom Convoy" intentions was offered up with his government facing accusations of overreach and demands to justify why it was the first ever to turn to the Emergencies Act.

The Trudeau government also released Tuesday its official reasoning for invoking the Act.

An Order in Council [argued that those behind the blockades have threatened to oppose their removal by force](#). The order said the barricades are connected with such activities as the "threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property, including critical infrastructure, for the purpose of achieving a political or ideological objective within Canada."

Mendicino said invoking the Emergencies Act removes ambiguity about whether police have the necessary authorities to intervene.

He said it adds flexibility by giving law enforcement the power to declare certain areas no-go zones, for example.

"No one wants to see another weekend like the last three on Wellington Street," Mendicino said, referring to protesters' street bashes that have consumed the main drag in front of Parliament. "And I'm assured by my discussions with the police that they fully appreciate that, and we now depend on them to do the job."

Alaska News: Alaskan truck drivers rally to oppose COVID-19 vaccine mandates for US-Canada border crossings

By [Dave Leval](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) - Truck drivers made a big delivery to Eagle River Sunday in their showing of solidarity with workers protesting COVID-19 mandates now in place for anyone looking to cross the United States' shared border with Canada.

More than 100 Alaskan truckers stopped at the Lions Club in Eagle River to show support for their Canadian counterparts, including the truckers and others from abroad who have spent almost two weeks parked outside the Canadian parliament in protest of mandates. Most of them want to end the nation's COVID-19 vaccine mandate that's been in place since Jan. 15, requiring that all truckers entering Canada be fully vaccinated. The U.S. imposed a similar mandate a week later, on Jan. 22.

The so-called "Alaska Freedom Convoy" started its journey at Cabela's in South Anchorage Sunday afternoon. The large group weaved its way through town, and then on to the Glenn Highway for a trip to Eagle River.

"Show our support, not just for us in Alaska, but people down in the states, Canada, everywhere," said Troy Tuttle, a driver from McKenna Brothers Paving who took part in the rally.

The Anchorage demonstration came together about a week after a Jan. 29 rally in Juneau.

“We want to support our truckers,” said Jamie Allard, who organized the protest and is currently a member of the Anchorage Assembly. “Without them, we’re not getting our supply. We need to get our supplies here. People need to be recognized for everything we’re doing here in our city.”

Allard said the convoy in Anchorage also raised money for those truckers not working as they continue their protest in Canada’s capital city of Ottawa.

As of Sunday, Ottawa was [under a state of emergency declared by Mayor Jim Watson](#), who said the protests there pose a “serious danger and threat to the safety and security of residents.”

Column: American reactions to Canada’s trucker protests shows much our politics have changed

LA Times, Jonah Goldberg, 15 February 2022

I’ve remained quietly fascinated by the trucker protests in Canada. Quietly, because I’ve struggled to figure out what I think about them, fascinated because they are a window on the political transformations on both sides of the 49th parallel.

The protests began as a revolt against a new and ill-advised vaccine mandate in January that required unvaccinated truckers to get the jab or isolate for two weeks each time they crossed the U.S. border. While I think not getting vaccinated is largely ridiculous, the rule made little sense in an 80% vaccinated country or for an occupation that involves almost no human interaction. Truckers aren’t nurses or schoolteachers. Solitude comes with the job. And [nearly 90%](#) of Canadian truckers are already vaccinated.

Of course, the protesters’ passion came from the built-up frustration with two years of lockdowns and mandates. And, as often happens with mass protests, the demands metastasized over time. Now they want Justin Trudeau’s government to dissolve and hold new elections. The demand is impractical, and illegally blockading streets and bridges to force it is also unjustifiable — whether it’s Canadian truckers or Black Lives Matter protesters or any other group. These folks may think of their actions as civil disobedience, yet when governments impose economic blockades, it’s literally an act of war. On Monday, Trudeau [invoked the Emergencies Act](#), which gives the federal government broad authority to restore order.

What truly fascinates me is the reactions to the Canadian protests here in the U.S. They highlight the way the coalitions that make up the left and right have changed profoundly, and how their attitudes and ideas are changing as a result.

If I were to describe these protests to a left-winger 50 — or 150 years — ago they would sound great. Proletarian laborers spontaneously using their class-power to monkey-wrench the wheels of global capitalism to press their grievances! This was once the stuff of heroic socialist agitation. The fact that tow truck drivers refused to help remove the blockade would be seen as the very soul of worker solidarity. Now, when GoFundMe announced it [would cut off donations](#) to the truckers, liberals shrugged or cheered.

One explanation for the reaction is that the pandemic has been subsumed into the pre-existing culture war fight. That’s why Trudeau, who is squarely on the liberal side of that divide, reflexively deployed every woke accusation imaginable at the largely peaceful strikers. Picking out a smattering of ugly signs — and one Confederate flag — Trudeau tried to tar the whole bunch with guilt-by-association. The truckers aren’t merely racists

and Nazi sympathizers, he claimed, but also showed signs of “[transphobia](#)” too. Rather than meet with the protesters, he chose [scorn](#): “Hate can never be the answer,” he insisted.

This points to a larger explanation. The old prism of class has been supplanted by the prism of identity politics. As the Democratic Party is increasingly [dominated](#) by people with college and graduate degrees, the white working-class core of the old FDR coalition has steadily migrated [rightward](#) (and there are early signs of a [nonwhite working class migration](#) as well). Leading Democrats speak the language of “intersectionality,” using phrases like [Latinx](#) that leave many Latinos cold. In the early days of the pandemic, mass protests in violation of lockdowns were acceptable — [even laudatory](#) — when done in the name of racial justice. But protests from truckers — or parents — who just want to return to normal? They’re derided as anti-science or worse.

Meanwhile conservatives, traditionally the champions of law and order, never mind the free flow of commerce, fell in love with the truckers and their disobedience. Anti-mandate absolutism is, again, part of the story. But many on the right in the U.S. have also convinced themselves that the Republican Party must become a nationalistic “[workers party](#).” The condescending liberal elites, undemocratic technocratic experts and woke globalists running the Democratic Party have made the GOP the [natural home](#) of the working stiff, they argue. This stuff can be exaggerated of course, but there’s an underlying truth to it as well. Regardless, one result has been the emergence of new right-wing emphasis on worker solidarity as a cultural imperative.

These domestic tectonic cultural changes turned the Ottawa protesters into a kind of Rashomon story or Spanish Civil War — a foreign conflict that illuminates how culture war combatants see the fight at home.

It’s a confusing transition and neither side has quite figured out how to adapt to their new coalitional imperatives, never mind adopt public policies that fit them. Perhaps to compensate for this fact, the rhetoric has outstripped the reality. Each side glibly accuses the other of being an existential threat, pitting transphobic Nazis according to one side against totalitarians according to the other.

Neither side is right about the other, but it’s unlikely the two will realize that any time soon.

Opinion: Justin Trudeau’s move to end the trucker protest was risky but correct

The Washington Post, Editorial Board, 15 February 2022

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is justified in [invoking](#) an emergency [law](#) enabling enhanced government powers to end the protest that has paralyzed the capital city of Ottawa, savaged public order and inflicted significant damage on the world’s 10th-largest economy.

The prime minister’s unprecedented decision to use the Emergencies Act is also risky, as Mr. Trudeau clearly understands. Some of the protesters, whose ranks include an array of extremists, have signaled through intimidation, threats and aggressive conduct that they do not intend to leave Ottawa without a fight.

Mr. Trudeau will have to tread carefully to avoid giving them one. He has already wisely [ruled out](#) deploying the military to unclog the city’s streets, which have been

paralyzed since late January with tractor-trailers, blaring their horns and rumbling on diesel fuel. Nonetheless, among other expanded powers, the emergency law grants his government the right to compel towing companies to remove the trucks, which some had said they were reluctant to do. The potential for violence is real.

Perhaps as useful as tow trucks, or more so, Canadian officials also say they will use the law to freeze corporate and individual bank accounts; suspend vehicle insurance; and crack down on crowdfunding and cryptocurrency sites, which have enabled the protesters to raise more than \$10 million in barely three weeks, a chunk of it from donors in the United States.

The protest, which has broadened into a tantrum against the Trudeau government generally, has reached a stage where it has moved beyond a legitimate expression of political opinion and dissent. By illegally occupying streets in downtown Ottawa, it has upended daily life in a city of 1 million people. It has broadened to menace supply chains by closing bridges carrying traffic to and from the United States, including, for nearly a week, a [crossing](#) near Detroit vital to the auto industry. In language by turns unhinged and menacing, it has demanded the removal or overthrow of Mr. Trudeau, who was just reelected to a third term in September.

That the protesters enjoy bellowing the word “liberty” does not negate the fact that their demands are blatantly antidemocratic and anti-constitutional. What they really favor is “liberty” from democratic norms.

Nor do the protesters represent a broad-based social movement. While many in their ranks are peaceable, the leadership includes extremists and white nationalists who have railed against immigrants, trafficked in misinformation and conspiracy theories, and brandished Confederate flags.

According to a [poll](#) released Monday, 3 in 4 Canadians are fed up and want an end to the protest, which was launched in anger over a government move to broaden already tough pandemic measures. The most prominent Canadian politician to give the protesters wholehearted support is [Maxime Bernier](#), leader of a far-right party.

Fundamentally, the protesters are engaged in a resolute effort to play havoc with the strictures of civilized society because they are disgruntled with the actions of a fairly elected government. The government is right to proceed with caution to restore order.

Canada's trucker blockade is a right-wing fantasy made real

MSNBC, Ryan Cooper, 14 February 2022

On Sunday, the Ambassador Bridge on the U.S.-Canada border between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, was reopened after a weeklong protest, in which a handful of right-wing fanatics had been blocking the bridge and holding up some \$355 million in goods in protest against a vaccine mandate for the trucking industry.

Protesters had taken over another nearby crossing into Sarnia, and one in Alberta, as well. As a result, Ford, Toyota, Stellantis and Honda idled some six Canadian car factories for several days, with knock-on effects creating even more snarls in supply chains. With one of Canada's major cities paralyzed, and three key economic arteries between it and the world's mightiest empire clogged, a severe shortage of new cars has been jacking up inflation and thus tanking President Joe Biden's approval rating.

But these protests are just the visible part of a larger right-wing occupation movement, and indicative of a worrying anti-government trend. And equally as worrying is how law enforcement on both sides of the border have responded.

Ottawa was terrorized for nearly two weeks by a few hundred protesters honking horns day and night, waving Nazi flags, harassing passers-by, and in one case, allegedly attempting to burn down an apartment building.

Canadian police finally cleared off Ambassador Bridge after the blockaders defied a court order to disperse. But throughout this process, law enforcement in both countries were astoundingly timid in their responses. Canadian cops had been walking on eggshells; we "are taking a diplomatic approach," the Windsor police chief told reporters. Meanwhile, Ottawa police tried to coax the city occupiers out by cutting off their fuel and getting an injunction against honking horns instead of arresting them. As for U.S. law enforcement, there was no sign that the country's gigantic security apparatus would crack down on the demonstration.

These events show that when law enforcement is genuinely needed to quash a far-right insurgency, it is timid and reluctant to do anything — a dangerous precedent to set indeed. Because these blockades are very likely just the start.

To be clear, as I have previously written, in the U.S. there definitely is far too much money spent on cops and courts, far too little spent on welfare benefits and social services that actually prevent crime, and far too little accountability for abusive cops. American police and jails are de facto charged with warehousing the social dysfunction caused by extreme inequality rather than actually doing much to control crime. But as we saw in Ottawa and Windsor, a democratic government does at least need some kind of armed service just in case some deranged violent minority tries to impose its will by force.

The problem in the United States, and it seems in Canada as well, is that police simply can't bring themselves to believe that far-right groups can be "real" criminals." When faced with right-wing lawbreakers, police (who are overwhelmingly conservative) tend to either sympathize with their demands or helplessly legitimize their grievances. The law enforcement response to the situation along the Canadian border smacked strongly of what happened with the Capitol Police before and during the attempted putsch on Jan. 6, when the agency brass failed to mobilize sufficiently despite obvious warnings and some of the officers fraternized with the rioters (though most of the rank-and-file did do their jobs as best they could, to be fair).

It scarcely needs to be mentioned that police do not grant such deference to nonwhite or leftist protest movements. For instance, when Native American groups temporarily blocked a key Canadian highway some years back over a land dispute, heavily armed SWAT teams were ready within hours to storm in and arrest them, which, unsurprisingly, turned out to not be necessary as they opened the road up after one day. In the U.S., Black Lives Matter protests that were almost entirely peaceful were constantly confronted with psychotic police violence. Black activists generally got the worst of it, but a substantial number of white people were savagely attacked as well. The "J20" group that protested Donald Trump's inauguration were persecuted for years by the Department of Justice with ludicrous charges carrying decades in prison (most of which were eventually dropped).

It's important to be clear about what the goals were here. These "truckers" (many of the participants are not actually truck drivers) are not Rosa Parks or Martin Luther King Jr. Their main explicit demand was an end to vaccine mandates and mask rules. They want this monstrous goal, which as a matter of basic biology would make the pandemic worse, imposed over the wishes of a large majority of Americans and a huge majority of Canadians. The extreme right can't win an election, so they are effectively taking the auto industry and the global supply chain hostage to get what they want.

It would be hard to imagine a more legitimate use of state authority to resist this demand — not with a massacre, of course, but with firm action to reopen traffic and take the culprits into custody. Not only

would it be protecting the health of the public (including Canadian truck drivers themselves, who are overwhelmingly vaccinated and not participating in the protest) and reopening the flow of vital goods and services, but it also would set a salutary example. If these groups get away with this, the far right will be emboldened, and will very likely attempt similar attacks and protests again and again all over Canada and the U.S. Fox News is already trying its level best to whip up an identical "convoy" to disrupt American highways and cities.

But for that to avoid more disruptions like this, law enforcement is apparently going to need some serious changes. If these agencies can't protect society from the deranged aggression of a right-wing fringe, they need to be rebuilt from the ground up so they can.

Canada tries to block funding for illegal border protests against Covid-19 rules with sweeping new financial measures

CNN, Kelly McCleary and Holly Yan, 15 February 2022

Canada has invoked the country's Emergencies Act for the first time ever in an attempt to sever financial support for protesters' costly blockades at US border crossings over Covid-19 mandates.

Financial institutions will now have the power to freeze personal or corporate accounts they believe are being used to fund the illegal protests, Freeland said.

"This is about following the money. This is about stopping the financing of these illegal blockades," Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland said Monday.

The government will use the law to target those funding protesters who have blocked border crossings -- resulting in economic losses of \$500 million a day, she said.

While the crucial Ambassador Bridge between Ontario and Michigan has reopened after a weeklong blockade, protesters are still obstructing crossings between Emerson, Manitoba, and Pembina, North Dakota, as well as between Coutts, Alberta, and Sweet Grass, Montana.

On Monday, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police seized long guns, body armor and high-capacity magazines tied to a group within the protest in Coutts, it said.

And now the US is closely coordinating with Canada to share information on people who might try to participate in blockades, Canada's Minister of Public Safety Marco Mendicino told CNN.

"The United States is monitoring carefully the blockades in Canada and what we agreed is that we could continue to share information and to advance the very close collaboration that exists between our CBSA (Canada Border Services Agency) and the (US) Customs and Border Patrol, so that we can identify any potential individuals who may trying to cross the border to advance illegal blockades in Canada," Mendicino said.

The public safety minister has been in regular contact with US Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas he said.

"Given the current moment that we're in ... we're obviously going to do what we can to bring about the end of these illegal blockades," Mendicino said.

An unprecedented move

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he was invoking the Emergencies Act for the first time since it became law in 1988 to blunt the impact of the "Freedom Convoy" protests.

The rallies began when a group of truckers moved into Canada's capital on January 29, clogging streets surrounding the Parliament building and elsewhere in downtown Ottawa to protest a new

mandate requiring them to be fully vaccinated when crossing the Canadian-US border or face a two-week quarantine.

They have been joined in Ottawa and at border stops and cities across the nation by others who want an end to other Covid-19 mitigation measures, like mask mandates, lockdowns and restrictions on gatherings.

But the protesters are a vocal minority. About 4 in every 5 Canadians fully vaccinated and nearly 90% of Canada's truckers fully vaccinated and eligible to cross the border, the government said.

"These illegal barricades are doing great damage to Canada's economy and to our reputation as a reliable trading partner," Freeland said.

The blockade at the Ambassador Bridge, which was cleared Sunday, impacted about \$390 million worth of commerce a day, the minister said. The combined impact of blockades at border crossings, including those in Alberta and Manitoba, has been \$500 million each day, Freeland said.

"These costs are real. They threaten businesses, big and small," Freeland said. "The Canadian economy needs (truckers) to be doing legitimate work, not to be illegally making us all poorer."

In addition to allowing financial institutions to freeze accounts suspected of funding illegal protests, Canada is also requiring crowdfunding sites and payment service providers used by protesters to register with the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada and report any large suspicious donations -- including digital payments and with cryptocurrencies. Some sites have raised millions of dollars.

While the Emergencies Act allows for the use of the military, the government will not take that step, Trudeau said Monday.

The measure can also temporarily suspend citizens' rights to free movement or assembly, but Trudeau said the government is not overriding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms -- a part of the Canadian Constitution that lays out "rights and freedoms that Canadians believe are necessary in a free and democratic society," according to a Canadian government website.

"We are not preventing people from exercising their right to protest legally," Trudeau said. The law will be limited geographically, in scope and in time, he noted.

Ambassador Bridge owner issues 'call to action'

The reopening of the Ambassador Bridge was "a win for Michigan's working families who are just trying to do their jobs and for businesses who can get back to shipping their products and produce," Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said in a statement Monday.

The bridge is the busiest land border crossing in North America, linking Detroit and Windsor, Ontario. It carries nearly 30% of annual trade between Michigan and Canada, Whitmer said.

That blockade, which caused supply chain issues for automakers on both sides of the border, ended when Canadian authorities cleared pedestrians and vehicles that had been blocking access to the bridge over the weekend.

Whitmer thanked US and Canadian border officials and business leaders for their work in resolving the ordeal and said it was important to "ensure that this does not happen again."

The company that owns the bridge echoed that sentiment and issued a "call to action" to prevent future closures.

"We must join together to come up with an actionable plan that will protect and secure all border crossings in the Canada/U.S. corridor and ensure that this kind of disruption to critical infrastructure will never happen again," said Matt Moroun, the chairman of Detroit International Bridge Company. "They are critical pipelines that supply the goods we need to keep our factories going, our neighbors working and our economies thriving."

But the standoff at the Coutts border crossing in Alberta took a turn Monday.

Eleven people were arrested, and authorities seized 13 long guns, handguns, multiple sets of body armor, a machete and a large quantity of ammunition and high-capacity magazines connected to a small, organized group within a larger protest at the crossing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police said.

"The group was said to have a willingness to use force against the police if any attempts were made to disrupt the blockade," the statement said. "This resulted in an immediate and complex investigation to determine the extent of the threat and criminal organization."

Ontario to loosen pandemic restrictions

While protests continue in parts of Canada, Ontario Premier Doug Ford said he plans to lift the province's vaccine passport requirements March 1 if hospitalization rates continue to improve.

Capacity limits will also be eliminated in all indoor public settings starting March 1, though masking requirements in Ontario will remain in effect "just a little bit longer," Ford said Monday.

But the loosening of pandemic restrictions have nothing to do with the protests, the premier said. "Let me be very clear: We're moving in this direction because it's safe to do so," Ford said Monday. "Today's announcement is not because of what's happening in Ottawa or Windsor, but despite it."

He also vowed "serious consequences" for those who cause disruptions while demonstrating in Ontario.

"To those who are still there, to those of you who are there with the sole objective of causing disruption and chaos, there'll be serious consequences for this lawless activity," Ford said.

"We will continue to raise the consequences against those who are holding millions of jobs and people hostage."

Vigils planned at Canadian embassies in US to protest imprisonment of pastor who preached to Freedom Convoy

Fox News, Jon Brown, 15 February 2022

Supporters of a Canadian pastor who has spent the past week in a maximum-security Calgary prison after speaking to members of the Freedom Convoy have organized vigils at various Canadian consulates in the United States to protest his treatment Tuesday.

Pastor Artur Pawlowski, who remains in solitary confinement for 23 hours per day at the Calgary Remand Centre, according to his lawyer, was arrested last Monday after he spoke to members of the trucker blockade along the U.S.-Canada border in Coutts, Alberta, on Feb. 4.

During a 20-minute speech to the truckers, the pastor urged them to "hold the line" against government overreach without resorting to violence. They had reportedly reached an agreement to abandon their blockade of the U.S. border and travel to Edmonton until changing their minds following Pawlowski's address.

Pawlowski also recounted to them the parallels he sees between the Freedom Convoy and Poland's Solidarity movement in the 1980s that ultimately led to the liberation of his native country, despite a crackdown from its communist government.

'We don't fight with guns and swords'

Pawlowski's most recent arrest marked his fifth since the pandemic. He first made international headlines last April when he threw armed police out of his sanctuary when they attempted to inspect it for COVID-19 compliance during an Easter service.

After continuing to hold church services in defiance of a court order, he has faced repeated dramatic arrests, including in the middle of a busy highway and on the tarmac of the Calgary airport.

Last summer, he conducted a speaking tour throughout the United States, meeting with lawmakers and warning large audiences that Western governments increasingly resemble the communist regime in Poland he fled as a young man.

Pawlowski was preparing to return to the border to officiate a church service and speak to the truckers there last week when police apprehended him, according to Pawlowski's son, Nathaniel Pawlowski.

"There was an undercover police van, unmarked vehicles staking out our house, we're guessing, for many, many hours, because they were outside for a long time," he told Fox News Digital.

Pawlowski was ultimately charged on one count of mischief over \$5,000, one count of aiding in blocking critical infrastructure and one count of breaching a bail condition for "not keeping the peace," which was related to probation conditions under which he was placed in October after being arrested following his U.S. tour.

Pawlowski remains imprisoned after being denied bail during a hearing last Wednesday, when a Crown prosecutor alleged that the pastor's speech to the truckers was an "overt threat to violence," according to the CBC.

Pawlowski explicitly told the truckers twice not to resort to violence during their protests, according to video of his remarks.

"May God help us all, because we don't fight with guns and swords," he said. "We don't fight with Tasers and the police vehicles. We don't. We just want to go back and work hard and achieve something and provide for our families. We just want to be left alone."

"Again, I'm not talking about violence, swords and guns all that stuff," he later told the truckers. "You have the most powerful wings ever. Who can move 1,000 trucks? Who can move 10,000 truckers with 100,000 supporters?"

Pawlowski faces another bail hearing Wednesday.

'We're at a pivotal point in history'

Nathaniel Pawlowski said his father has been treated poorly in prison but that he remains undeterred and has undertaken two fasts based on biblical tradition.

"He finished a three-day fast based on the story of Esther, where she fasted so that the enemy would be exposed," he said. "And now he's doing a 21-day 'Daniel fast,' which is basically light food, no meat. It's eating vegetables so that he would get an answer from God."

Peaceful prayer protests against Pawlowski's imprisonment are being planned Tuesday at the Canadian consulates in New York City, Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago and Las Vegas.

Cindy Chafian, who is the executive director of Firebrand Action and Media, which is organizing the vigils, said she remains unsure what the turnout at the embassies will be given the short notice but that the initiative remains important.

"Regardless of what happens, we're still going to keep pushing through, because I don't think they're going to let Artur out," she said. "But the goal is to raise awareness to what's happening to Artur. It's not just what's going on since COVID. They've been targeting him for many, many years. He is not a friendly person in the government's eyes because he speaks the truth, and they don't like that."

The organization is also readying signatures for a letter to send to Congress regarding Pawlowski's treatment.

Chafian said the initiative's goals extend beyond Pawlowski and are intended to raise international awareness regarding how other clergy in Canada have been treated since the pandemic. Churches throughout Canada have faced imprisoned pastors, locked facilities, steep fines and continued interference from government officials.

In June, Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., called on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to consider adding Canada to its special watch list because of how pastors are being treated in the country.

"We're at a pivotal point in history, and if we don't stop this, we're just going to go down the deeper slide," said Chafian. "And if we don't think that it's coming here to the U.S., we're woefully mistaken."

BBC: Trudeau vows to freeze anti-mandate protesters' bank accounts
Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has taken the unprecedented step of invoking the Emergencies Act to crack down on anti-vaccine mandate protests.

Mr Trudeau said the scope of the measures would be "time-limited", "reasonable and proportionate" and would not see the military deployed.
With no need for court orders, banks can freeze personal accounts of anyone linked with the protests.

Hundreds of demonstrators remain in Canada's capital city.

On Sunday, law enforcement cleared anti-mandate protesters at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor - a critical pathway for Canada-US trade - after a week-long stalemate.

What began as a rally against a new rule that all truckers must be vaccinated to cross the US-Canada border, or quarantine upon return, has grown into a broader challenge to all Covid health restrictions.

"This is about keeping Canadians safe, protecting people's jobs," Mr Trudeau told a news conference on Monday.

He said the police would be given "more tools" to imprison or fine protesters and protect critical infrastructure.

Mr Trudeau told reporters the legislation would be applied temporarily and in a highly specific manner.

Critics have noted that the prime minister voiced support for farmers in India who blocked major highways to New Delhi for a year in 2021, saying at the time: "Canada will always be there to defend the right of peaceful protest."

Mr Trudeau's invoking of the Emergencies Act comes as demonstrations across Canada enter their third week.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said at Monday's news conference that banks would be able to freeze personal accounts of anyone linked with the protests without any need for a court order.

Vehicle insurance of anyone involved with the demonstrations can also be suspended, she added.

Ms Freeland said they were broadening Canada's "Terrorist Financing" rules to cover cryptocurrencies and crowdfunding platforms, as part of the effort.



"It's all about following the money," she said.

She spoke after hackers released details of what they said were 93,000 donations for the truckers totalling \$8.4m (£6.2m) to the crowdfunding platform GiveSendGo.

The Emergencies Act, passed in 1988, requires a high legal bar to be invoked. It may only be used in an "urgent and critical situation" that "seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians". Lawful protests do not qualify.

Speaking on Monday, Canada's Justice Minister David Lametti argued these conditions had been met.

But the Canadian Civil Liberties Association disagreed, warning that the move "threatens our democracy and our civil liberties".

Ottawa protest leader Tamara Lich dismissed Mr Trudeau's move, telling AP News: "There are no threats that will frighten us. We will hold the line."

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, a Conservative, said he supported the federal government.

But the premiers of Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan said the emergency powers were not needed in their regions.

Before Mr Trudeau's announcement, Quebec Premier Francois Legault said invoking the Emergencies Act could "throw oil on the fire".

Will Trudeau succeed?

Analysis by Jessica Murphy, BBC News, Toronto

Under growing pressure to bring the disruptive protests to an end - be it from the White House or increasingly frustrated Canadians - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has entered uncharted territory with the decision to invoke the never-before-used 1988 Emergencies Act, the country's most powerful tool for when it is facing a national emergency.

The powers announced by Mr Trudeau go into effect immediately - but his government has to present it to the House of Commons and the Senate within a week and needs a green-light or the proclamation would be revoked.

All main Canadian federal political party leaders have said it's time for the protests - which have had an impact on supply chains, the national economy and the country's relations with the US - to end.

But they aren't all necessarily on board with Mr Trudeau's unprecedented move.

Conservative leader Candice Bergen voiced concern it could inflame the situation.

The support of NDP leader Jagmeet Singh may give Mr Trudeau enough votes to pass it through the House - though the Senate could still be a hurdle.

Protests are ongoing in various parts of the country.

In Ottawa, the nation's capital, between 400 to 500 trucks have been parked in the city centre for 18 days.

Protesters have also been blockading border crossing at Coutts, Alberta, and Emerson, Manitoba.

On Monday, Alberta police arrested 11 people and seized a cache of guns and other weapons.

Weekend protests have also taken place in cities including Toronto and Winnipeg.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-60383385>

BBC: Canada trucker protest: What powers will Emergencies Act give Trudeau?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has invoked the never-used Emergencies Act to give his government enhanced authority in response to the anti-vaccine mandate protests and blockades gripping Canada.

The law will grant Mr Trudeau's government extraordinary powers for 30 days - including the power to prohibit public assembly, travel and the use of specific property.

The move comes amid weeks of disruptive - and expensive - demonstrations against Covid-19 restrictions.

Law enforcement on Sunday re-opened the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor - a critical crossing for Canada-US trade - after a week-long standstill. But in Ottawa, hundreds of demonstrators have begun their third week of occupation around the city's Parliament Hill.

Here's a look at what the Emergencies Act is, and what it can actually do.

What is the Emergencies Act?

The Emergencies Act, passed in 1988, bestows the government with added powers in times of national crisis.

The situation must meet a high bar, specifically an "urgent and critical situation" that "seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians".

And Cabinet may only invoke the legislation if the emergency cannot be addressed by any existing federal law and if it exceeds the capacity of the provinces to handle it effectively.

The Emergencies Act outlines four different types of emergencies: public welfare emergencies, public order emergencies, international emergencies and war emergencies. If the legislation is invoked this week, it will likely be under the 'public order' category. Again, the criteria here is strict - lawful protests do not qualify.

Instead, the situation must be considered a threat to the security of Canada, as defined by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act.

This law outlines four possible scenarios:

- Espionage or sabotage
- Foreign-influenced activities
- Threats or use of acts of serious violence for political, religious or ideological objectives
- Covert, unlawful acts intended to undermine or overthrow the constitutionally established government

It is so far unclear which scenario Mr Trudeau would rely on to justify the use of the Emergency Act - none of these four scenarios have been clearly present in Ontario.

To invoke the law, the prime minister must also consult with the premiers of any impacted provinces before putting the move before Parliament. If the act does not pass a vote there, the proclamation will be revoked.

On Monday, Ontario Premier Doug Ford said he would support the federal government and "any proposals they have to bring law and order back to our province". The premier of Quebec, Francois Legault, told reporters he didn't want to see the act applied in his province.

What powers does the Emergencies Act grant?

Under the Act, the government has a number of far-reaching powers at its disposal.

The government could bar travel to or from specific areas - from Parliament Hill or major border crossings, for example. It could order the evacuation of people and personal property from certain areas, possibly using this power to clear out congested areas of protesters. And it could direct individuals and companies to render essential services, perhaps ordering tow-truck companies to lend their services and clear the roads of demonstrators and their vehicles.

But while Mr Trudeau's government may soon be granted an almost carte blanche to respond to the protests, there is no indication the prime minister will also seek military intervention.

While Mr Trudeau has said that "everything is on the table", he has maintained that military involvement would be a last resort.

"We are a long way from having to call in the military," he said on Friday.

Has the Act ever been used before?

No, the Emergencies Act has never been applied. The law was considered in the early days of the pandemic under the public welfare category but was ultimately ruled unnecessary.

A predecessor of the law, called the War Measures Act, was used three times in Canadian history: during the First World War, the Second World War and, most controversially, by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau - Justin Trudeau's father - during the October Crisis.

The elder Mr Trudeau used this earlier law in 1970 to suspend civil liberties and send in armed forces to respond to the political kidnappings of a British diplomat and a Quebec politician by home-grown terrorists known as the Front de liberation du Quebec (FLQ). Army tanks and more than 1,000 troops from across Canada were called in to support police in Quebec, ushering in comparisons to a police state.

Pressed by reporters about how far he would go in response to the crisis, Pierre Trudeau responded with the famous phrase: "Just watch me."
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-60381096>

Washington Post: Canadian truck drivers distance themselves from 'Freedom Convoy' protests

By [Claire Parker](#)

Today at 7:51 a.m. EST

In just a matter of weeks, Canadian truck drivers protesting [coronavirus](#) vaccine mandates became the unexpected darlings of the global right wing.

Republican politicians showered the truckers, who descended on the Canadian capital, with praise. [Copycat convoys](#) gathered from New Zealand to France.

The protests against U.S. and Canadian regulations barring unvaccinated truck drivers from crossing the border began Jan. 28 — and soon attracted a range of anti-government activists, far-right figures and opponents of pandemic restrictions more broadly. But even as the vocal group of truckers, known as the "Freedom Convoy," grabbed the world's attention, many of Canada's truck drivers were scrambling to distance themselves from the movement, which they view as radical and fringe.

In their view, the protesters' actions — including shutting down cross-border trade and laying siege to the capital — have hurt rather than helped drivers in the industry, and failed to advance the labor issues most truckers care about. They point out that only a small percentage of Canadian truckers have joined the demonstrations, and the vast majority of drivers are already vaccinated, according to trucking associations and Canadian authorities.

"There is a vocal minority, which is trying to steal the headlines, but a silent majority has actually been working day and night," said Manan Gupta, publisher of Road Today, a Canadian magazine for South Asian truckers. About a third of Canada's roughly 180,000 tractor-trailer drivers are immigrants, according to the most recent survey, in 2016.

The protests have caused long delays at the border and forced drivers to take lengthy detours. Such disruptions are "not received well" by truckers who are not participating in the convoy, Gupta said, adding that "they are the ones keeping our supply chain intact and running."

"These illegal blockades have had a detrimental impact on our members and customers' businesses. These have also had a very significant negative impact upon our professional driving community," the president of the Canadian Trucking Alliance, Stephen Laskowski, said in a statement Monday.

The roadblocks hampered trade with the United States and forced American auto companies to scale back production, prompting the White House to call last week for the swift reopening of transportation routes.

Canadian police [cleared the blockade of the Ambassador Bridge](#), a vital border crossing linking Detroit to Windsor, Ontario, on Sunday night. And on Monday, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [invoked](#) the country's Emergencies Act, which grants the government sweeping powers to respond to national emergencies. The Canadian Trucking Alliance came out in support of the move.

Some of the convoy's most visible leaders aren't even truckers. And at the demonstrations, Confederate flags and pro-Trump signs have mingled alongside the Canadian maple leaf emblem. Money has also [poured in from donors in the United States](#).

James Bauder is one prominent figure and leader of the fringe group Canada Unity, which is well known for peddling conspiracy theories. Action4Canada, which sent vehicles and members to join the convoy, also promotes on its website the unfounded claim that Bill Gates wants to use the vaccine to implant microchips in humans.

“They are using our name in the wrong place and the wrong time,” said Ajay Singh Toor, spokesman for Canada’s West Coast Trucking Association. “It’s not a trucker convoy anymore.”

As a result, the convoy’s demands run the gamut from the removal of all public health measures to Trudeau’s ouster. Teamsters Canada, a union that represents 15,000 long-haul truck drivers, called the convoy a “despicable display of hate lead by the political Right and shamefully encouraged by elected conservative politicians.”

The movement “does not reflect the values of Teamsters Canada, nor the vast majority of our members, and in fact has served to delegitimize the real concerns of most truck drivers today,” the union said in a statement last week.

Issues such as wage theft, bad roads and a lack of restrooms are far more pressing issues for most truckers than vaccine mandates, trucking associations say. But convoy protesters haven’t raised them.

Manbir Bharj drives a crane truck in Ontario and says that the vaccine mandates imposed by the U.S. and Canadian governments on truckers were “fair” because they helped mitigate the spread of the virus.

“This is why the virus is spreading and mutating into different variants — because people don’t know how to follow” rules, Bharj said.

Some worry that the damage to the industry may be hard to reverse. The convoy threatens to exacerbate a labor shortage that already plagued Canadian trucking before the coronavirus hit, Gupta said. About 23,000 truck driver jobs need to be filled, according to a January report by Trucking HR Canada.

“These protests, these blockages, they’re not creating a positive workplace for anybody who wants to embrace trucking,” Gupta said.

Matthew Marchand is a tanker-trailer driver from Ottawa who transports liquid bulk chemicals between Canada and the United States. He is vaccinated but wasn’t fully supportive of the mandate, which he said didn’t really give truckers a “true choice.”

“But how [the protesters] are going about it, to me, is not acceptable,” he said. “The negative reputation that they’ve created for us isn’t going to do us any favors with the public’s perception of our industry. We already have a hard enough time as it is.”

Driver Ted McNeill [told CityNews Toronto](#) last week that he had to take a five-hour detour to deliver a truckload of food into Canada.

He had a similar message for the protesting truckers: “Stop it. You’re making us look bad.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/02/16/canada-trucker-distancing-protests/>

Le Monde :« On a le sentiment d’être opprimés » : à Paris, les « convois de la liberté » convergent
Par [Luc Bronner](#)
REPORTAGE

Des centaines de personnes, aux revendications hétéroclites, parmi lesquelles la levée du passe vaccinal, mais aussi des mesures de soutien au pouvoir d’achat, ont manifesté dans la capitale, samedi, avant d’être dispersées à coups de gaz lacrymogènes.

Les klaxons et les bouchons, des chants, quelques pancartes, de nombreux drapeaux bleu, blanc, rouge, mais jamais de blocage de la capitale ni de manifestation massive : plusieurs centaines de voitures ont défilé dans Paris, samedi 12 février, pour défendre les « *libertés* » et le pouvoir d'achat après que des cortèges venus de différentes régions françaises [ont convergé vers Paris](#) depuis trois jours. D'après le ministère de l'intérieur, la mobilisation a réuni 32 100 manifestants en France, dont près de 7 600 à Paris. Les collectifs organisateurs évoquent, quant à eux, plus de 7 000 véhicules.

La Préfecture de police, qui [avait interdit le rassemblement](#) et été confirmée dans son choix par le Conseil d'Etat samedi soir, avait choisi de rendre l'accès à Paris particulièrement compliqué. Elle a notamment fermé des portes d'accès du périphérique et effectué des contrôles routiers en amont, bloquant par exemple jusqu'à trois cents véhicules sur l'autoroute A4 en milieu d'après-midi. Plusieurs centaines de procès-verbaux ont été dressés par les forces de l'ordre au cours de la journée pour « participation à une manifestation interdite ».

https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/02/12/on-a-le-sentiment-d-etre-oppresses-a-paris-les-convois-de-la-liberte-convergent_6113442_3224.html

Le Monde : « Convois de la liberté » : Attal dénonce une « tentative d'instrumentalisation » politique, Jadot « ne soutient pas » cette manifestation

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, le candidat « insoumis » à l'élection présidentielle, interrogé sur France 2 jeudi soir, a dit soutenir « les revendications, si c'est bien contre le passe vaccinal ».

Le Monde avec AFP- Publié le 11 février 2022 à 09h11 - Mis à jour le 12 février 2022 à 08h20

Une mise en garde gouvernementale avant l'arrivée du convoi à Paris. Le porte-parole du gouvernement, Gabriel Attal, a alerté vendredi 11 février contre la « *tentative d'instrumentalisation* » politique de la « *lassitude des Français* » vis-à-vis de la pandémie que constituent selon lui [les « convois de la liberté »](#). Si le candidat écologiste Yannick Jadot a dit comprendre la réaction de l'Etat vis-à-vis des blocages, l'« insoumis » Jean-Luc Mélenchon a fait savoir qu'il pourrait « *soutenir* » le mouvement.

Partis en « convoi » sur les routes de France, quelques milliers d'opposants au passe vaccinal ont annoncé sur les réseaux sociaux vouloir « rouler sur Paris », [inspirés par les routiers canadiens, qui bloquent le centre de la capitale, Ottawa](#), depuis près de deux semaines.

« *En raison des risques de troubles à l'ordre public* », le préfet de police a annoncé, jeudi 10 février, [interdire à Paris les « convois de la liberté » formés pour protester contre les restrictions sanitaires](#), qui prévoyaient de « bloquer la capitale » à partir de vendredi, avant de rallier Bruxelles – où ils ont également été interdits jeudi. « *Un dispositif spécifique sera mis en place (...) pour empêcher les blocages d'axes routiers, verbaliser et interpeller les contrevenants à cette interdiction* », a ajouté la Préfecture de police de Paris [dans un communiqué](#). L'arrêté d'interdiction prend effet vendredi, jusqu'à lundi inclus.
« Une situation inacceptable » à Ottawa

« *Il y a une instrumentalisation d'une fatigue, une lassitude des Français, en tout cas une tentative d'instrumentalisation* », a dénoncé Gabriel Attal, invité vendredi sur Europe 1. « *Vous avez des responsables politiques – je ne sais pas si je peux employer ce terme – qui cherchent à capitaliser politiquement sur cette lassitude et cette fatigue en essayant de lancer des mouvements* », a accusé le porte-parole du gouvernement en citant nommément Florian Philippot. « *Il suffit de regarder ses déclarations pour voir que c'est un mouvement qu'il encourage* », a-t-il ajouté.

« *Ce n'est pas le convoi de la liberté ce convoi-là, c'est le convoi de la honte et de l'égoïsme, ce ne sont pas des patriotes, ce sont des irresponsables* », avait dénoncé [mercredi sur LCI](#) le secrétaire d'Etat aux affaires européennes, Clément Beaune. Il avait également décrit le mouvement comme un « *énième épisode des antivax qui sont pour certains cas complotistes, qui croient que le vaccin consiste à insérer des puces dans les bras des gens* ».

« *Je ne soutiens pas cette manifestation, en revanche, je soutiens le droit à manifester, mais je comprends parfaitement l'Etat de ne pas vouloir que Paris soit bloqué* », a réagi sur BFM-TV Yannick Jadot. « *Quand on voit la situation à Ottawa, au Canada, c'est une situation inacceptable du point de vue démocratique* », a ajouté le candidat d'Europe-Ecologie-Les Verts.
« Je ne peux pas être contre ça »

Le candidat de La France insoumise, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, avait fait valoir sa différence la veille en estimant jeudi 10 février sur France 2 qu'il pourrait « soutenir » le mouvement, compte tenu des similitudes qu'il y voit avec ses propres combats pour le pouvoir d'achat ou contre le passe vaccinal. « *Je pourrais les soutenir, oui, bien sûr, je vais voir comment tout cela se met en place* », a-t-il expliqué sur le plateau de l'émission « Elysée 2022 ».

« *Est-ce que les mouvements doivent montrer patte blanche et belle carte avant d'être soutenus ou pas ?* », a-t-il demandé à la journaliste Léa Salamé, expliquant que, lui, commençait « *par écouter ce que racontent les gens avant de décider s'ils sont antivax, fascistes, antisémites et tout ce qu'on nous a fait pour les "gilets jaunes"* ».

« *Voilà des gens qui se mettent en mouvement en parlant de pouvoir d'achat, je ne peux pas être contre ça* », a argumenté M. Mélenchon jeudi soir. « *Ne croyez pas qu'ils se mettent en voiture à 2 euros le litre par plaisir* », a-t-il ajouté. Le candidat des « insoumis » à l'élection présidentielle a poursuivi : « *Ils disent qu'ils sont contre le passe vaccinal, moi aussi, je ne vais pas leur dire qu'ils ont tort.* »

S'il a estimé que « *ces mouvements n'appartiennent à personne* », il a, par ailleurs, jugé que « *quoi que je dise ou fasse, ça n'aura aucun impact* ». « *Je soutiens les revendications, si c'est bien contre le passe vaccinal, parce qu'il ne sert à rien* », a-t-il conclu.
https://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2022/article/2022/02/11/jean-luc-melenchon-pourrait-soutenir-les-convois-de-la-liberte_6113237_6059010.html

Marc-André Pharand

Analyste des politiques | Policy Analyst

Direction des relations avec les États-Unis | United States Relations Division

Bureau de la stratégie pour l'Amérique du Nord | North American Strategy Bureau

marc-andre.pharand@international.gc.ca

Cell: 343-549-4061